



Parent Information Network



Glossary of Special Education Terms

academic - refers to subjects in the school curriculum such as reading, math, social studies, science, etc.

achievement tests - a test which measures what a child has learned in the academic subjects in school.

accommodations - are provisions made in **how** a student accesses and demonstrates learning. These do not substantially change the instructional level, the content or the performance criteria. Such changes are made to provide a student with meaningful and productive learning experiences, Environments, and assessments based on individual needs and abilities

adaptations - are changes made to the environment, curriculum, instruction and/or assessment practices in order for a student to be a successful learner. Adaptations include accommodations and modifications. Adaptations are based on an individual students strengths and needs.

adaptive physical education - modified activities that allow a child with a disability to participate in a program with the same or similar objectives as the regular physical education program.

advocate - someone who takes action to help someone else (as in "educational advocate"); also to take action on behalf of someone who cannot help themselves.

appeal - a written request for a change in a decision; also, the action in making such a request.

appropriate - able to meet a need; in special education, it usually means the most advantageous setting possible for the student or the curriculum utilized in the student's IEP that is as close to the general education curriculum as possible.

Arizona Academic Standards - standards which have been written for Arizona's students to provide every student a quality education grounded in high academic standards.

Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) - An annual test to measure student achievement in grades 3, 5, and 8 in reading writing, and mathematics. Additional subjects may be added in the future.

Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards A (AIMS-A) An alternative format of the AIMS test to measure student performance toward meeting the Arizona Standards at the Functional or Readiness levels.

assistive technology - a device or service required if "educationally" relevant and necessary to enable a child to be educated in the least restrictive environment.

1.assistive technology device - any item, piece of equipment, or product system used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability; and

2.assistive technology services - any services that directly assist a child with a disability or others, as appropriate, in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device

at public expense - 1. means the district pays for the full cost of the independent education evaluation or ensures that an educational evaluation of the child is provided at no cost to you, the parent,
2. means the district pays for the full cost for the education services for the child as outlined in the IEP.

at risk - a term used with children who have, or could have, problems with development that may affect later learning.

attention span - extent to which a person can concentrate on a single task.

AZ Leading Education through the Accountability and Results Notification System (AZ LEARNS) – is an initiative for an accountability system to ensure all students have the skill and knowledge they need to succeed. Close statewide analysis of student data and student profiles can provide measures to influence decision making. (SAIS).

AZ READS - is a comprehensive plan aimed at improving reading achievement in Arizona. It challenges Arizonans to participate in a statewide collaborative effort to make this vision a reality: that every Arizona child in Arizona will learn to read proficiently by third grade and remain a proficient reader through the twelfth grade.

auditory perception - the ability to interpret or organize the sensory data received through the ear; an example would be the ability to differentiate between the sounds of the words *leaf* and *leave*

behavior intervention plan - (BIP) a written behavior plan that is targeted to include services and modifications designed to address the behavior so that it does not reoccur in the school setting or to promote a desired behavior.

child find - state education agency (**SEA**) and public education agency (**PEA**) procedures for locating children ages birth through 21 with disabilities who are not receiving special education services (the unserved), or who are not receiving appropriate services (the under served)

child study team - (CST) a team of educators that meets to discuss concerns with a child's school performance. This team is a pre-referral step for trying interventions in the classroom setting before referring for an evaluation in special education. Also known as a student study team (**SST**) or teacher assistance team (**TAT**).

consent - permission parents may give after they have been fully informed regarding the activity the district or school wants to implement. This information must be provided to the parents in their native language or mode of communication. Parental consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time

continuum of alternative placements - a variety of placements available to meet the individual needs of children with disabilities; the continuum must include instruction in regular classes, special education classes, special schools, home instruction, instruction in hospitals and institutions, and instruction in other settings. The federal regulations require that the placement decision must be made on an individual basis, not on the availability of a program or programs or lack of a continuum of alternative placements. (Also see least restrictive environment)

developmental history - a charting of the progress in the steps or stages of growth and development of a child (ages birth to 18 years) in such skills as sitting, walking, talking, physical, social, and emotional development.

disability - the result of any physical, sensory or mental condition that affects or prevents one's ability to develop, achieve, and/or function in an educational setting at a normal rate

District Assessment Plan (DAP) - each district/charter is required by law to develop an assessment plan that covers all areas of the curriculum. It should be a plan that includes various learning styles and abilities. All students in each district regardless of disabling condition will be assessed.

dispute resolution – an ADE program for districts/schools and parents with issues and concerns. It may be handled informally through early dispute resolution, through mediation, through a written complaint to the department or through due process. All of these are intended to provide solutions to concerns at the lowest level possible.

due process (procedure) - action that protects a person's rights; in special education, this applies to action taken to protect the educational rights of students with disabilities. An example is the use of due process hearing to settle a dispute between parents and the school or district.

eligible - able to qualify to receive special education services based on standard criteria.

English Language Learners – (ELL) or (EL)

evaluation - a collection and review of information about a child's learning needs, which may include social, psychological, and educational assessments used to determine need for special services; a process using observation, testing, and test analysis to determine an individual's strengths and weaknesses to plan his or her educational services. Parental consent for initial evaluation must be obtained for this process.

evaluation team - a team of people, including the child's parents and specialists from different areas of expertise who observe and test a child to identify his or her strengths and weaknesses

extended school year - (ESY) additional special education and related services for a child with a disability to supplement the normal school year which are provided as part of a free appropriate public education (**FAPE**) for time periods when school is not in session.

free appropriate public education (often known as FAPE) - one of the key requirements of Public Laws 94-142 and 101-476 and 105-17, which states that an education program must be provided to all eligible children (regardless of disability) without cost to families. "Appropriate" is not defined, but other references within the law imply the setting that can best meet the child's educational needs so the child can benefit from his/her education.

functional behavior assessment - (FBA) is a targeted assessment that addresses a student's behavior that needs to change. The results are to be used to develop a behavior intervention plan to replace the unwanted behavior or to stimulate wanted behavior. The IEP team must look at reinforcers and consequences that will ensure that the behavior does not reoccur in the school setting.

IDEA '97 - abbreviation of the title of Public Law 105-17 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1997.

identification - the process of locating, identifying, and evaluating children needing special education services.

Independent (outside) Educational Evaluation – (IEE) an educational evaluation done by a qualified examiner outside the school system which must be considered by the school system making decisions about the child's education.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) - a written education plan for an eligible child with disabilities developed by a team of professionals (teachers, therapists, etc.) and the child's parents; it is reviewed and updated yearly and describes how the child is presently performing, what the child's learning needs are, and what services will be provided to the child.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) - a written plan for an infant or toddler (ages birth to three) years with developmental delays developed by a team of qualified professionals and the family; the IFSP must contain the level of development, strengths/needs, major goals or outcomes expected, services needed, date of the next evaluation, and the starting date of the present **IFSP**.

Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) - 1. A physical location, not to exceed 45 days, outside the regular classroom, determined by the IEP team to be appropriate for a student with a disability. 2. A change in the physical location of where a student with a disability will receive his/her instruction, usually the result of a disciplinary action. The general curriculum will continue to be available to the student, as well as services and modifications as necessary. 3. A change in placement ordered by an administrator or an IEP team for behavior that includes weapons or illegal drugs.

least restrictive environment (LRE) - to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled

location - refers to setting on the continuum of alternative placements; it does not refer to the particular school, classroom, or teacher in which/by whom a child's IEP will be implemented

mediation – an informal intervention between parents and a school system to resolve disputes

Medicaid in the Public Schools – (MIPS) – third party payment for covered services performed by qualified providers reimbursed to the school or district from Medicaid.

modifications - are substantial changes in **what** a student is expected to learn and to demonstrate. Changes may be made in the instructional level, the content or the performance criteria. Such changes are made to provide a student with meaningful and productive learning experiences, environments, and assessments based on individual needs and abilities.

multidisciplinary evaluation team (MET) - a team composed of educators, administrators, agency staff, and parents as equal team members. This team reviews existing data and any additional evaluation data to determine if the student is eligible for special education services.

network - in special education, an active group made up of people who *communicate* with one another to exchange information and share resources on common interests.

No Child Left Behind – (NCLB) four basic education reform principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work.

occupational therapy – (OT) a rehabilitative process directed by an occupational therapist whereby purposeful activities are employed as a basis for improving muscular control; may focus on fine motor development and/or the upper half of the individual's body; may be a related service for children with disabilities if it is determined necessary for an appropriate education.

parent training and information centers - projects that provide information and training to parents of children with special needs about acquiring services, working with schools and educators to ensure the most effective educational placement for their child, understanding the methods of testing and evaluating a child with special needs, and making informed decisions about their child's education.

physical therapy - (PT) the treatment of disabilities using massage, exercise, water, light, heat, etc., all of which are mechanical rather than medical in nature. Physical therapy is practiced by a professionally trained physical therapist under the referral of a physician; in school it may be a related service if it is determined to be educationally necessary.

policy/policies - assurance statements that guarantee certain procedures will routinely be followed by staff as related to early intervention and special education programs. The rules that a state or local school system has for providing services for and educating students with special needs.

present level of educational performance - precisely (accurately, clearly) describes the child's performance in academic areas, non-academic areas, communication, daily living skills, etc.

prior written notice - a written document the district or school gives to the parents of special education students when they propose or refuses to initiate a change in the identification, evaluation, placement, or provision of free appropriate public education. This document must include 1) a description of the action proposed or refused and why that action was taken 2) any other options considered in taking that action and why those were rejected; 3) which tests, evaluations, or records the school used to support that action, 4) a description of any other factors involved in taking the action; and 5) a full written explanation of procedural safeguards; and 6) a list of contacts to explain procedural safeguards to parents.

Public Education Agency – (PEA) means a school district, charter school, accommodation school, state supported institution or other political subdivision of the state that is responsible for providing education to children with disabilities.

Public Law 105-17 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), amendments of 1997, the current federal law that governs requirements for special education services.

Public Law (P.L.) 94-142 - also called the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA). The first federal law mandating special education. Passed in 1975 requiring that public schools provide a *free appropriate public education* to school-aged children ages five through twenty-one (exact ages depend on the state's mandate), regardless of disability

Public Law (P.L.) 101-476 - an amendment to P.L. 94-142 (1975) passed in 1990 requiring that public schools continue to provide a *free appropriate public education* to children ages 3 -21, including Autism and Traumatic Brain Injury, regardless of the disability; also called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Public Law (P.L.) 102-119 - an amendment to P.L. 99-457 (1986) requiring states and territories to provide a *free appropriate public education* to all eligible children ages birth to 5 and provides funds for states and territories to coordinate services to infants and children with developmental delays ages birth up to three years.

related services - transportation and developmental, corrective, and other supportive services that a child with disabilities requires in order to benefit from education; examples of related services include, but are not limited to: assistive technology, speech/language pathology, audiology, health services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, counseling services, parent training, interpreters for the hearing impaired, social work services for educational purposes, rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, medical services for diagnostic and evaluation purposes.

Student Accountability Information System (SAIS) - a data based electronic reporting system devised by ADE for schools to report performance data per student. It will be used for accountability and student profile report decisions during educational reforms.

service delivery - services (therapy, instruction, treatment) provided a child receiving special education.

special education services - adapting the content, methodology or delivery of services, or specially designed instruction for eligible children ages three through twenty-one with special needs. These programs/services include special learning methods and/ or materials in the regular classroom, special classes and programs, instruction at home, in hospitals, and/or institutions, or other settings if the learning or physical problems require them. These services also include related services to meet the special needs of eligible children at no cost to the parent. Special education services are those needed in order for the child to benefit from his/her education.

special needs (as in a child with "special needs") - a term to describe a child who has disabilities or one who is at risk for developing disabilities and who requires special services or treatment in order to make progress.

standard deviation - a unit used to measure the amount by which a particular score differs from the Mean (average) of all the scores in the sample (persons used to take the test before it is used with the public). Different tests have different standard deviations.

State Education Agency (SEA) - the agency or office within each state that oversees special education requirements and coordinates special education programs and services for public school systems in that state.

Student Led IEP – (SL- IEP) the ability of a student to participate in, or to lead their own Individual Education Plan team meeting.

surrogate parent - a person appointed by the court to function in the role of parent for a child only on special education matters when the natural parent can not be identified or located. The person has all the same rights as a natural parent for special education procedures.

transition - a movement or change from one level of education to the other. There are six identified stages of transition. These include: 1. early intervention services or home to preschool; 2. preschool to kindergarten; 3. primary to intermediate grades; 4. intermediate to middle school; 5. middle school to high school; and 6. high school to post-secondary.

transition services - a set of activities which prepares a student with a disability for the move from school to post-school activities such as employment, post-secondary education, adult services independent living, or community participation. Transition services must be included annually in the IEP for students by age fourteen, are based on the student's needs, preferences, and interests. Transition activities must include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and post-school living objectives, and can include daily living skills training and vocational education.

visual perception - the identification, organization, and interpretation of sensory data received by the individual through the eye; for example, in school it includes the ability to differentiate between the letter **d** and the letter **b**.

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